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Hixham Hall Barns J and K
Heritage Statement
Including Design and Access Statement



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Site Address:

Barns J&K
Hixham Hall,
Furneux Pelham,
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Index:

1. Introduction	page 2
2. Background to the application	page 4
3. Brief history of the farm	page 5
4. The list description	page 8
5. Heritage significance assessment	page 9
6. The Statement of Significance	page 10
7. Design and Access Statement	page 11
8. List of key elements affected by the application	page 15
9. Assessment of impact on significance	page 15
10. Ecology statement	page 16
11. Conclusion	page 16

1. Introduction

This report accompanies an application for Listed Building Consent for conversion of two farm buildings to holiday let accommodation. This application relates to Barns J and K. An application has already been successful for the adjacent Barn A.

This statement has been prepared to fulfil paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework and to assist the local planning authority in discharging its duty with respect to S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Documents used in the preparation of this statement:

Historic England – Agricultural Buildings, Listing selection guide

Historic England - Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings (Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse)

Historic England – The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings:

“Maintaining and reusing farm buildings which no longer have a viable agricultural use is a sustainable option, taking into account the wide range of benefits that they afford. In summary they:

- *Make an essential contribution to England’s remarkably varied landscape character and local distinctiveness, telling us about how the land was settled and how our ancestors farmed and lived*
- *Represent an historical investment in materials and energy that can be sustained through conservation and careful reuse*
- *Provide an important economic asset for farm businesses or, where they have become redundant, a high-quality environment for new rural businesses including home-based working”*

Historic England - Farmstead Assessment Framework:

“We encourage new uses which sustain and enhance their value. Traditional farmsteads and buildings make a fundamental contribution to both landscape character and local distinctiveness through their varied forms, use of materials and the way that they relate to the surrounding landscape and settlement.”

“The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places good design, the enhancement of local distinctiveness and conservation of the historic environment at the heart of sustainable development and good planning in rural areas.”



Key to buildings

Ponds (blue)

This application relates to buildings J & K



Key to Heritage

Heritage buildings (purple)

Heritage buildings with Grade 2 listing (red)

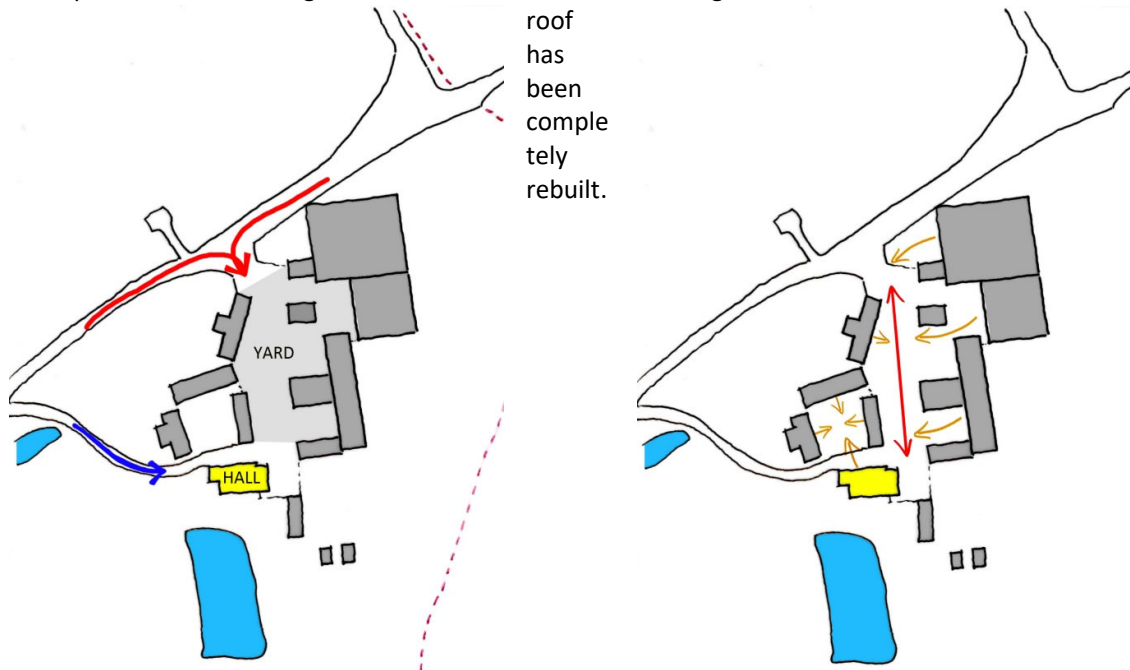
Hixham Hall is a farmstead with 11 barn buildings situated to the north of Hixham Hall farmhouse. Hixham Hall farmhouse is an 18th century range with a second range added in the 19th century. The house is brick and timber with a tiled roof and central gutter. The farmstead is based on a loose courtyard plan with detached buildings in an irregular pattern. The oldest barns (labelled A, E, F, G, H, I, J, K) date from the 17th century and are timber framed and weather-boarded, with half-hipped (mainly) tiled roofs and brick plinths. Barns I, J, K and Hixham Hall create a small courtyard. Barns A, E, F, G and H create a longer yard lining the route from the Farmhouse to the lane. Larger, newer barns (B, C, D) sit at the end of the yard closest to the lane. These more recent additions are constructed of steel frames and concrete blockwork with corrugated metal cladding and roofs.

We have limited information on the original use of the barn buildings. The historic barns are too small to be designed for storing and threshing of corn. The interiors are open and plain with minimal door and window openings. Building I is partially open-sided, but all others are enclosed. There are no interior divisions or fixtures to point to the keeping of livestock. The majority of the barns are thought to have been used as multi-purpose farm buildings.

We understand buildings I and J have been used as stables. Building I is likely to have been built as a stable, given the proximity to the farmhouse, the open bays and brick floor. J was later used as a farm workshop. Building E is a detached granary built on mushroom-shaped saddle stones. Granaries are important indications of a farm's scale and wealth. The granary at Hixham Hall is small, with the same aesthetic as the rest of the barns and without other notable features.

It is assumed that the farm developed in response to need and with no underlying development plan. As the farm dates from before the Agricultural Revolution, the buildings would have been constructed in a piecemeal manner with traditional manual farming at its heart. With their small openings and stepped level thresholds these buildings are too small to be adapted and updated to cater for modern farming methods. They have been largely redundant and are now unable to contribute to the running of the farm. The fabric of the buildings has survived well over the years, with plenty of historic timbers still evident in some of the barns. However, there has been substantial addition of timber structure, for

example additional bracing between roof trusses. Also, building K has modern roof timbers where the



Key to access

- Farm access (red)
- Hixham Hall access (blue)
- Footpath (dotted)

Orientation of farm buildings

- Small courtyard to front of Hixham Hall
- Linear yard running north-south (red arrow)

Individually, the barn buildings hold little merit in their design or contribution to the understanding of farming over time. The small scale and use of basic timber construction are evidence of the lower status of the farm and its original owner. The materials would have been resourced locally, timber being the most readily available. However, as a collection of structures, and given the proximity to the farmhouse, the group are an interesting example of a small scale farmstead.

The farmhouse Hixham Hall, barn F and granary E are Grade 2 listed. The rest of the barn buildings are covered by curtilage listing.

2. Background to the application

The farm owners would like to diversify the farm and reuse barn buildings to provide alternative and ancillary revenue. As the small barns provide no function for the working farm, we have reassessed their purpose and propose new uses that will return the buildings to being a vital part of the new farm community and income. As the farm evolves to include new business and a new dynamic, we propose to retain and adapt the barn buildings so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

In this application Barns J and K are proposed to be converted to holiday let use. The barns are owned by Hixham Hall owner Mr Collins. His daughter Mrs Worrall intends to manage these new residences in

connection with new uses on the farm. She will continue her family's role as a working member of the farm.

In support of the sensitive reuse of heritage farm buildings we draw on the following policy guidance. From National Planning Policy Framework 2021:

"80. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

...

b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

...

e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area."

"Supporting a prosperous rural economy

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship."

From The East Herts District Plan 2018:

"Policy GBR2 Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt

I. In order to maintain the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt as a valued countryside resource, the following types of development will be permitted, provided that they are compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area:

...

(b) facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, including equine development in accordance with CFLR6 (Equine Development), and for cemeteries;

(c) new employment generating uses where they are sustainably located, in accordance with Policy ED2 (Rural Economy);

(d) the replacement, extension or alteration of a building, provided the size, scale, mass, form, siting, design and materials of construction are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding areas;

...

(f) rural exception housing in accordance with Policy HOU4 (Rural Exception Affordable Housing Sites);"

"Policy HA1 Designated Heritage Assets

I. Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment of East Herts.

...

IV. The Council will, as part of a positive strategy, pursue opportunities for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment recognising its role and contribution in achieving sustainable development."

3. Brief history of the farm

Domesday

Hixham Hall was a settlement in the Domesday Book, in the hundred of Edwinstree and the county of Hertfordshire. It had a recorded population of 7 households in 1086, putting it in the smallest 40% of settlements recorded in Domesday.

The Victoria County History (Morris 1976), states "Furneux Pelham cannot be certainly distinguished in the Domesday Survey from the other Pelhams, all of which were held of the Bishop of London in 1086 and afterwards. Since, however, it was in the 14th century in the same tenure as Hixham Hall, it may be conjectured that in 1086 it was comprised by the holding of Ranulf, then a tenant of the Bishop in Hixham and in Pelham".

Domesday Book records:

Households: 2 villagers, 3 smallholders, 1 cottager, 1 slave

Land and resources: 3 ploughlands, 2 lord's plough teams, 1 men's plough teams, Woodland 60 pigs

Valuation: Annual value to lord: 2 pounds in 1086, 2 pounds when acquired by the 1086 owner, 3 pounds in 1066.

Owner: Tenant-in-chief in 1086 London (St Paul) , bishop of Lords in 1086: Ranulf, William

Overlord in 1066: Esger the constable

Hixham was an early-attested site in the Parish of Furneux Pelham with the place name Titheresham (1407) Tettersham (1556) Hedsham Hall (1591) and then Hixham Hall c 1825.

Hixham Etymology: 'Theodric's ham'

The commonest Saxon place names are those ending in -ton or -ham. Derived from the Old English, the word Ham means village, estate or home (or sometimes Hamm, meaning meadow).

1840 Tithe map

Evidence from the Hertfordshire HER & St Albans UAD

HHER Number: 6394

Type of record: Monument

Name: MOATED SITE, HIXHAM HALL, FURNEUX PELHAM

A possible moat, identified by Alan Aberg in 1982. The 1840 tithe map shows three water-filled arms of a probable moat SW of the Hall, connected to a pond at the NE corner. The island was about 72m from north to south; the west arm was missing. Two more ponds lay beyond the moat to the east, south of the Hall. The later 19th century OS maps show that the moat was infilled in the mid 19th century, leaving only the three ponds. The site is now covered in woodland.



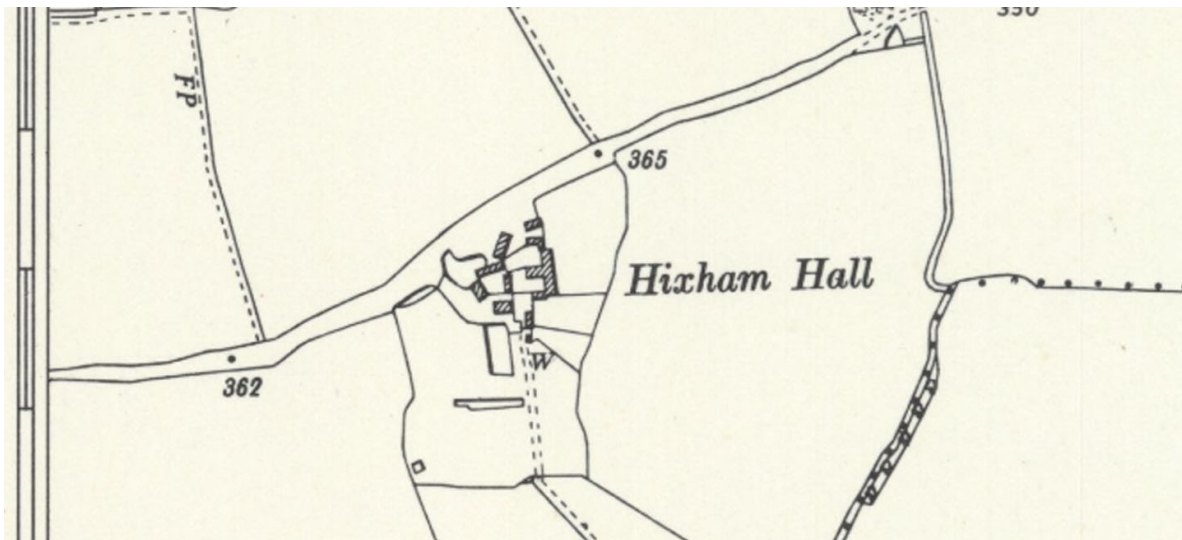
OS map 1878 (above)

This 19th century OS map shows that the moat described on the 1840 Tithe Map had been infilled, leaving only the three ponds. Hixham Hall and barn buildings A, E, F, G, H, I, J & K are all present on this map. Two additional buildings can be seen to the north-east which are no longer standing. The buildings are arranged in a courtyard plan with a loose layout of detached buildings with one linear plan of interlinked buildings to the east.



OS map 1896 (above)

In 1896 the layout remains unchanged from the 1878 map.



OS map 1960 (above)

In 1960 the ponds and buildings can still be seen in the same configuration.

Gazetteer of early Anglo-Saxon burial sites 1964 – 1500m away from site boundary

Evidence from the Hertfordshire HER & St Albans UAD

HHER Number: 1471

Type of record: Monument

Name: ROMAN AND SAXON FINDS, CROSS FIELD GRAVEL PITS, FURNEUX PELHAM

In 1937 it was reported that Roman material had been found over a number of years in the largest of three gravel pits, in Hand Cross Field at the corner of Clapgate Road and Cut Throat Lane. The finds were in shallow ditches which may have enclosed house sites. Two sesterces of Hadrian, one of Marcus Aurelius, sherds of tile and pottery, mortaria fragments, sling-stones and a Saxon iron knife were found. In 1939 two more Saxon knives, one with an inhumation, and an iron spearhead were found. No finds have been made in the surrounding area, including Hixham Hall farm.

Medieval Village Research Group 1974

Evidence from the Hertfordshire HER & St Albans UAD

HHER Number: 1824

Type of record: Monument

Name: MANORIAL SITE, HIXHAM, FURNEUX PELHAM

Hixham is listed by the Medieval Village Research Group Annual Report as a possible deserted village, presumably on the grounds that in 1086 the manor had 7 households (hardly a large number). However, there is no evidence of nucleated settlement, or subsequent desertion. But the post-medieval Hixham Hall may have medieval origins as a manorial centre, with a probable moat.

Listing 1985

On 14th January 1985 the farm received Grade 2 listing. There are separate listings for the main farmhouse Hixham Hall (1101898), the barn building F (1176523) and the Granary building E (1101899).

4. The list descriptions

Statutory Address : HIXHAM HALL
Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1101898
Date first listed: 14-Jan-1985
Listing NGR: TL4532726777

C18 original range with additional range added in C19. Brick and weatherboarding, plain tiled roof with central gutter. Two storey and attics, double hung sashes to C19 facade, central doorway with decorative pilasters, canopy and six panelled raised and fielded door. Two flat lead roofed dormers. Casement windows to earlier range, cast iron diamond pattern. Group of five timber framed, weather-boarded and tiled barns and outbuildings to the north and east.

Statutory Address : BARN AT HIXHAM HALL
Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1176523
Date first listed: 14-Jan-1985
Listing NGR: TL4535926799

Cl7, timber framed and weatherboarded, corrugated iron half hipped roof, seven bays, single aisle on western side.

Statutory Address : GRANARY AT HIXHAM HALL
Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1101899
Date first listed: 14-Jan-1985

Listing NGR: TL4534726824

C17, timber framed and weatherboarded, half hipped tiled roof, brick plinth on three sides, 'stone mushrooms'.

5. Heritage Significance Assessment

Providing Significance

The group of farm buildings are shown on historic maps and noted in the Domesday book. 18th century or earlier minor farm buildings are rare so these barns provide a record of 17th century traditional vernacular farm buildings. Barns J and K, along with the other older barns, creates a positive contribution to the setting of the Grade 2 listed farmhouse.

Farmsteads are said to contribute to local character if they include traditional farm buildings and these buildings and spaces relate to one another. The spaces between barns and the interaction of the buildings with one another provide significance at Hixham Hall farm.

The farmstead is arranged alongside a courtyard with multiple detached buildings and some attached buildings. The arrangement creates small exterior spaces with relationships between buildings and the surrounding landscape, including woodland and ponds. The relationship of the farm with the setting and views from the lane across the landscape contributes to local distinctiveness.



Site Diagram

The farmstead can be described in 3 zones.

Zone 1 Hixham Hall and Barns IJK:

These buildings are of domestic scale, collected around courtyard 1.

Zone 2 Barns AEFHG:

Medium sized ancillary buildings, collected around main farm yard 2.

Zone 3 Barns BCD:

Modern buildings, large scale, linked to road and larger rear space 3.

Limiting Significance

The barn buildings are typical in their appearance, scale and materials. They are not unusual or outstanding examples of their type. None of the buildings are built to the design of land agents, engineers or architects displaying innovative design. The barns hold little merit in their design or contribution to the understanding of farming over time. There are no rare surviving materials, details or inscriptions.

The older buildings are not clearly visible from local roads or rights of way, they face inwards and are obscured by hedges.

The farm is in single ownership and the buildings are now redundant for modern farming purposes.

In summary, the heritage significance of Hixham Hall farm is deemed to be in the scale, massing and relationships between this collection of small farm buildings. The buildings themselves hold limited value in their materiality and details.

Capacity for Change - Opportunities

Barns J and K are very domestic in scale, lending them to be converted into 2-bedroom detached holiday lets. The small barn buildings relate to one another across the yards, creating the ideal conditions for a collection of interacting uses to be let out together or individually to create a much needed new income for the farm. There is the opportunity for private external spaces as well as shared spaces to join together and provide a community feel.

Barns J and K can be retained and reused in their current scale, form, structure and materiality, with minimal change to the external envelope. Internal linings can be provided to upgrade the fabric to Building Regulation compliance, with new openings created in the exterior only as required to allow in required levels of daylight. The timber clad exteriors and very beautiful structural timbers exposed internally, are a highly sought-after aesthetic, offering great potential to be enjoyed and protected by future generations.

No new access is required from the lane. The Hixham Hall drive will be used (blue arrow on diagram page 4) with a new turning to access the barns. Within the application site, hard and soft landscaping will provide external areas for use by the two barns. The site could be developed to accommodate energy generation for renewable or low-carbon sources, for example ground-source or water-source heating and solar power. There is the possibility for minimising water consumption through sustainable drainage systems which recycle water.

Capacity for Change – Constraints

The proximity of barns to one another mean that windows and doors must be located carefully to ensure privacy.

Vehicular access and parking must be designed to ensure the setting of the barns is not disrupted. It may be desirable to design the external areas with reference to the site of the historic pond (now removed), which was located north-west of buildings J&K.

6. The Statement of Significance

Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. English Heritage's document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance splits the value which an asset may have into four component parts: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Value.

Evidential value (the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity) :

Hixham Hall farm is an example of a small, traditional farmstead in the local vernacular. The barn buildings remain largely unchanged (except for repairs and maintenance) from their construction in the 17th century. By the composition of a collection of buildings we can imagine an active small farmstead. However, there is little evidence to suggest how the barns were each used.

Historical value (the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present) :

Recorded in the Domesday Book we know that the Owner in 1086 was the Bishop of London (who owned much land in the area at this time). The Lord in 1086 was William Ranulf, the Overlord in 1066 was Esger the constable. There are no other notable associations.

Aesthetic value (the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place) :
Barns J and K are typical, small multi-purpose farm buildings. The construction is timber frame, weather-board cladding, plain tiled roofs and brick plinths. The barns sit in a square formation with Hixham Hall and Barn I, creating a small courtyard. The barns have period farm aesthetic and vernacular materials. Elevations facing into the courtyard have more existing openings than the rest of the elevations, showing the interaction and collaboration of the timber barn buildings in their original use.

Communal value: (the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory) :
As the farm buildings remain unchanged for a considerable time, they will be part of the local collective memory. They are close to a public footpath and as such will feature as local landmarks, in the same way as does the lane, footpath, gates and old trees. The composition of the grouping of small buildings and views between will have the greater significance than the details of the individual buildings.

In summary:

Composition the group of barns: some significance
Exterior elevations: low significance
Interiors: low significance

7. Design and Access Statement

The farm is characterised by the collection of small timber barn buildings with typical local vernacular arranged close to Hixham Hall. The view from Hixham Hall looking north takes in the smallest timber barn buildings collected around a small courtyard garden.



Courtyard looking North
(Barn K to the left, Barn J in the centre)



View looking East
(Barn J to the left, Barn K to right of the photo)

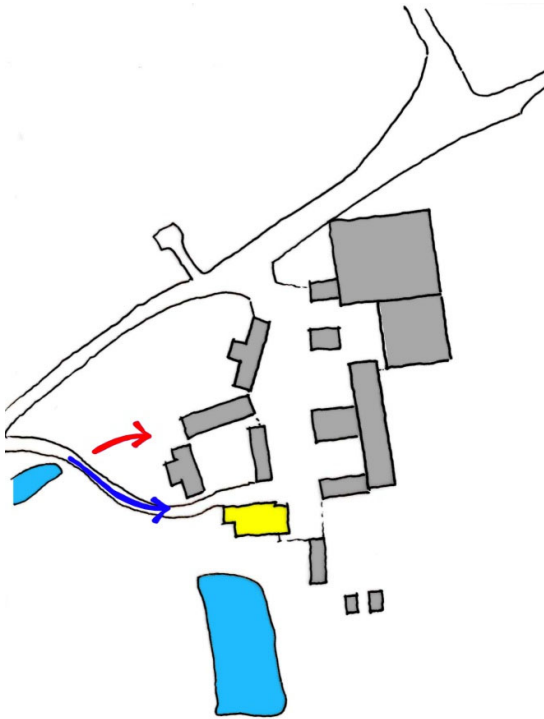
The strategy for the conversion is to restore the barn's fabric, retain the aesthetic and make as few changes as necessary to accommodate the new use. The timber cladding will be renovated where required with boards replaced where failing and missing. The roof clay tiles will be treated in the same manner. Historic fabric will be repaired with suitable materials and techniques. Doors will be retained and reused as external shutters. These will bring character to the building as well as providing privacy. Historic openings will be retained and reused. New openings will be added as required to provide adequate daylight for the internal spaces.



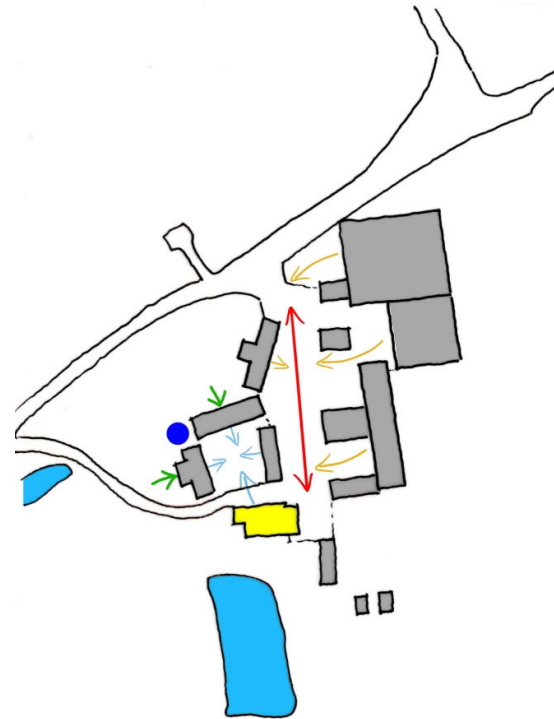
South Elevation of Barn K
(Hixham Hall to the right and Barn I in the centre)



West Elevation of Barn K
(Barn J behind on the left)



Access Diagram
Drive to Hixham Hall (blue)
Proposed driveway to Barns J&K (red)



Orientation Diagram
Linear farm yard (red arrow)
Views in to courtyard (blue arrows)
Entrance to Barns J&K (green)
External seating area (blue circle)

Barns J and K will be reached by a new drive that leads to two separate parking areas. Access by car and foot is located to the North and West of the barns. This keeps it separate from the farm yard, the courtyard and Hixham Hall. Courtyard-facing windows provide views to the courtyard garden. Glazed patio doors provide access from each house to an external seating area to the North-West of the barns. This maintains privacy and ensures the new use does not compromise the existing working of the farm. The design aims to respect the outlook of listed property Hixham Hall.

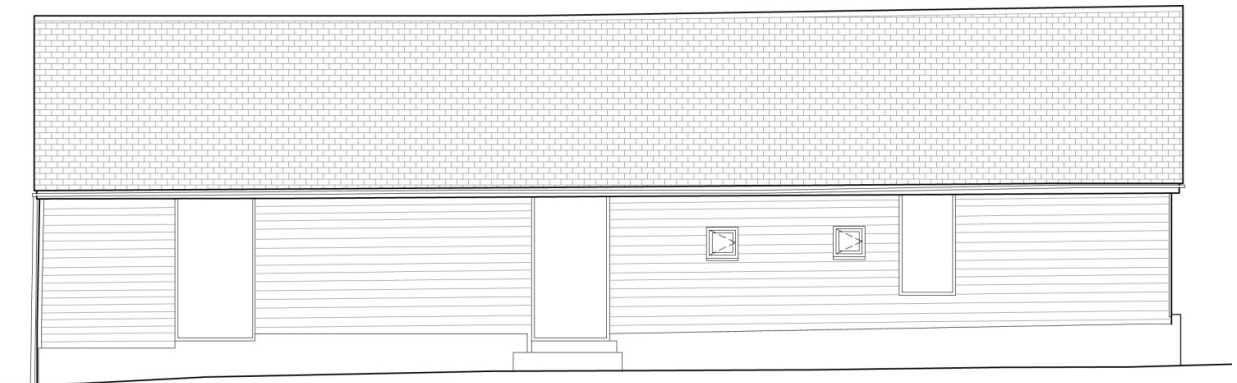


Illustration of Proposed Barn J Front Elevation



Illustration of Proposed Barn K Front Elevation

Front doors and patio doors are all located on the private north and west sides. Windows have been designed to respond to the internal layout and make use of existing openings where possible. The use of tall openings and irregular alignment seeks not to domesticate the barn, but to retain its agricultural charm. Roof windows will be used to add light to attic rooms in Barn K without compromising privacy.



Barn J Proposed Courtyard Elevation

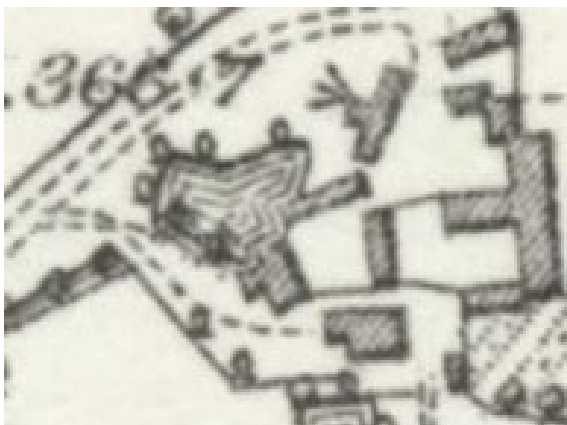


Barn K Proposed Courtyard Elevation

Barn J is designed as a single storey holiday let with a central entrance hall. Here there is a cloakroom, utility and a passageway leading to two bedrooms and the bathroom. To the other end of the barn is an open-plan room accommodating a kitchen-diner and living area. Glazed doors from the living room lead directly to the patio area. The internal space will retain the scale and charm of the old barn in the open plan room, which will have a vaulted ceiling and exposed roof trusses. Timbers from an existing partition will be retained to create a screen between the kitchen-diner and living area.

Barn K is designed to be a two-storey holiday let, with rooms in the roof. The central projecting bay on the west elevation becomes the front door, opening onto a tall space with vaulted ceiling and a staircase. On the ground floor, the main part of the barn houses an open-plan room with kitchen-diner and living area. A small utility and downstairs toilet are tucked behind the kitchen. The staircase leads up to two bedrooms and a bathroom which will be created by removing the non-original roof structure and replacing it with triangular structural bracing timbers. Daylight and views are provided upstairs by windows on the flanking elevations and roof windows.

Hard and soft landscaping around Barns J and K reinforce the orientation of the barns facing out, away from the courtyard. Planting, patios, bin stores, bicycle storage and parking are all accommodated in a layout that provides a community for the two properties. The layout is reminiscent of the large old pond that used to abut the north-west of the two barns. By tying the barns together with this new device the scheme reinterprets the old association of the two barns. Pervious paving will be used to better the conditions for surface water runoff. The retained ponds elsewhere will be used to store water as part of sustainable urban drainage system from the parking and areas of hardstanding.



OS Map 1878 showing pond abutting barns J&K



Diagram to show proposed landscaping

Climate change adaption and mitigation

To address the comments below both barns will be insulated to comply with the new U-values introduced in June 2022 for Existing Building Extensions to ensure the heat loss through buildings elements such as walls, windows and roofs is kept to a minimum to reduce the need for heating in the winter and overheating in the summer. This will allow for the introduction of an Air Source Heat Pump to provide hot water and heating for each barn which is a key low carbon heating system to help decarbonise the heat in both holiday lets. The ASHP will be discreetly located behind the black timber weatherboarded Bike and Bin Storage away from any principal elevation.

The new proposals also propose EV Points for each holiday let adjacent to the parking provision.

“Policies CC1 and CC2 of the District Plan relate to climate change adaptation and mitigation. These outline that all new development must demonstrate how the design, materials, construction and operation of the development would minimise overheating in the summer and reduce the need for heating in the winter, and integrate green infrastructure into the development. Development is required to demonstrate how carbon dioxide emissions will be minimised. No details have been provided within this application to show compliance with policies CC1 and CC2.”

Extract from Officers Report 3/22/2438/FUL

8. List of key elements affected by the application

The proposal includes the following main changes to the heritage buildings:

Modern concrete floor to be excavated and replaced with new breathable floor with permeable insulation	The floor of Barns J and K are rough concrete, a modern addition to the old building. The original floor does not exist and cannot be preserved. Removing the concrete floor allows the floor to be insulated. The new construction is appropriate to the historic context.
Feeding trough and counters to be removed	These are low quality farm and workshop fixtures that do not merit being preserved.
Timber partition to be removed in Barn J	Two other partitions will be retained. One will be exposed as a screen separating the living areas of an open-plan room. Limited loss of existing building fabric.
Repairs to existing materials	All repair work will be undertaken sensitively and using similar materials and appropriate heritage techniques.
New window and rooflight openings	All new openings have been designed to offer adequate daylight and views for amenity. Limited loss of existing building fabric.
Reuse and reconfiguration of existing barn doors	Doors are to be retained and reused. The existing barn doors will be retained and reused as shutters. Reuse ensures protection for the future.
New interior fabric linings	Timber frame to support the first floor (Barn K), thermal insulation and plasterboard will be added to the interior of all existing external walls. This ensures the timber weatherboarding and structure is retained and the original cladding can be enjoyed from the outside.
New first floor and new staircase in Barn K	Additional new timber construction will be designed to be sensitive to the historic fabric and reversible if desired in the future.

9. Assessment of impact on significance

The barn buildings have not been used for many decades. This proposal aims to repair and renovate Barns J and K to ensure their long life well in to the future. By bringing the buildings back into use and giving them a new lease of life this proposal will optimise the buildings and give most benefit to the farm community.

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 197, the applicant considers this proposal to be putting the building to viable use consistent with its conservation. By renovating the buildings, they can once again bring a positive contribution to the farm.

In line with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 202, we consider this proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset. This harm will be far weighed against the benefits of the proposal, by securing its optimum viable use.

In line with East Herts District Plan policy HA7 the proposed development will not result in the damage or loss of features of special architectural or historic interest. The character and appearance or setting of the buildings will be preserved or enhanced.

The proposals in the design, scale and use of materials are in keeping with the existing character of the barns and the surrounding buildings. It is considered therefore that the proposals accord with local and national heritage and design planning policy.

10. Ecology Statement

The Environment Agency locates Hixham Hall farm within Flood Zone 1, an area with low probability of flooding. The government's flood check service assess the long term flood risk from surface water as Very Low Risk.

The client has commissioned ecology consultant Temple to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) comprising a Phase 1 habitat survey, protected species assessment and ecological evaluation, and a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats of Barns J and K.

The report accompanies this planning application in full. The following key ecological issues have been identified:

- a confirmed bat roost is present on Site in Barn K
- habitat suitable for roosting bats is present
- terrestrial habitat suitable for great crested newts is present
- habitat suitable for breeding birds is present
- habitat suitable for widespread reptiles is present
- habitat suitable for hedgehog is present
- a range of measures will be undertaken to satisfy the requirement for ecological enhancement included in planning policy and the Environment Act 2021.

Subsequently, the client has commissioned Babec Ecological Consultant to undertake a great crested newt survey of water bodies within 250m of the proposed development site and a suite of further bat surveys of Barns J and K, and to produce a technical report detailing the findings.

The report accompanies this planning application in full. The objectives were to:

- Determine the presence or likely absence of great crested newts within the proposed development site.

- Characterise the bat roost recorded in Barn K and determine the presence or likely absence of further bat roosts within Barn K.
- Determine the presence or likely absence of bat roosts within Barn J, and if present, characterise any bat roosts recorded.
- Provide appropriate recommendations to enable the proposed development to proceed in accordance with the relevant legislation and policy relating to great crested newts and roosting bats.

11. Conclusion

We propose the conversion of Barns J and K to holiday lets to provide a much needed income to the farm. The proposal is a sympathetic design that enhances the character and setting of the farmstead and will preserve the historic fabric of the barns for years to come.